

EDITORIAL

LESSONS FROM NORTH WAKE CHURCH CREATION

STEWARDSHIP SYMPOSIUM

We are happy to offer this second issue of the *Theoecology Journal*, which contains essays, articles and book reviews in the intersection of theology and ecology. We have witnessed in the last decade a series of books by atheists who were determined not to develop a dialogue with theologians on creation stewardship. Nevertheless, we found success in developing a dialogue between ecologists and theologians in a symposium held in a local church in Wake Forest, NC last May, 2012. The mere fact that the two schools of scholars met under the roof of a church gives hope for the future.

This second issue of *Theoecology Journal*, also gives hope that we are spreading the word around to colleagues, who are either Christian scientists or theologians, to meet each other in the pages of this unique journal so that we may narrow the gap between science and religion. Looking ahead, it seems reasonable to conclude that discussions regarding creation stewardship will continue but hopefully with less acrimony and more clarity and consensus than has been to date. Herein lies one of the great challenges of the future for those truly concerned about forwarding a reasonable course of action designed to promote serious stewardship of creation. The word “creation” (the very word used by Edward O. Wilson) is used here intentionally to underscore that the object of stewardship as understood from the Christian perspective is the work of a personal, triune God. From this perspective, what motivates creation stewardship is neither a political agenda nor a deification of nature, but the reality that God has given man the responsibility to care for creation in God’s stead. It is not necessary for everyone to have a personal belief in this God in order to benefit from its implications in caring for creation. Of course, this does not tell us *how* to care for creation, only that we must.

Therefore, we think it is important to see the Christian theologian and trained pastor as dialogue partners with the scientist for a couple reasons. First, the Christian community can give a stable foundation for creation stewardship rather than arguments that are grounded in some sort of crisis theory. When crisis is made the primary reason for creation stewardship the argument gets shifted to whether or not there is a crisis. If the basis is crisis then those who see no crisis see no need of creation stewardship. Second, because the data is open to interpretation much of the acrimony exists. Now if the reason for creation stewardship is as we suggest, then the starting point is not crisis but rather a God-given responsibility to mankind as a whole. In this case the discussion focuses on what is the best *way* to be good stewards of creation. It is at this point that we see the Christian theological community coming to the discussion as a partner with scientific community in the dialogue.

The Christian perspective gives the basis for creation stewardship and it can provide a moral voice regarding how to appropriate possible technology within the larger understanding of the order of the universe. Theologians, Christian scientists and pastors can assist by encouraging the community at large to see the importance of Christian creation stewardship and encourage dialogue in order to resist the temptation to cynicism and isolation. With the theologian and scientist in dialogue, the debate eventually moves from whether stewardship is required to what is the best way to achieve a more robust and reasonable approach to the issues involved in the stewardship of creation.

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